REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3-15, and 41-49 will be pending in this application upon entry of the above amendments. Claims 1, and 8-15 have been amended. Claims 41-49 have been added. The amendments find support in the original specification, claims, and drawings. No new matter has been added. In view of the above amendments and remarks that follow, Applicant respectfully requests reexamination, reconsideration, and an early indication of allowance of claims 1, 3-15, and 41-49.

As an initial matter, Applicant thanks the Examiner for graciously conducting a telephone interview with the undersigned on November 1, 2004.

In the current Office action, the Examiner rejects claims 1 and 3-7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zellweger (U.S. Pat. No. 6,144,968) in view of May et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,354), and further in view of Delano (U.S. Pat. No. 6,430,558) and Ukai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,101,506). The Examiner also rejects claims 8-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zellweger in view of May, Delano, and Ukai and further in view of Ambroziak (U.S. Pat. No. 6,415,319). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claims 1 and 8, as amended, recites that "a user traverses from the first set of first-level content indexes sharing the first category feature to the second set of first-level content indexes sharing the second category feature in response to a first user action without first invoking the second indexing level, and traverses second-level content indexes and

representative indexes in the first indexing level in response to a second user action." (Emphasis added).

Applicant's invention as recited in the above claims is a profound new innovation in data structure management and browsing. Applicant's invention provides a content indexing structure that allows data to be organized into multiple, substantially circular indexing levels. With such a structure, browsing may occur more efficiently than a tree-type hierarchical structure because it does not require that an upper node be traversed before traversing to a node in a different category. In order to illustrate the savings provided by Applicant's invention, attached hereto as Exhibit A are charts that compare shortest distance path calculations from node to node in an exemplary single-level circular structure, a tree-type hierarchical structure, and Applicant's multi-level circular structure.

The claimed invention also allows first level indexes that share a first category feature and a second category feature to be positioned in-between representative indexes that represent the two category features to visually depict that these indexes share the two category features. For example, the "Simpsons" television program may be categorized as both animation and comedy. According to this example, the content index for this television program is positioned between a representative content index for an animation program and a representative index for a comedy program.

With this background in mind, Applicant submits that none of the cited references teach or suggest all of the limitations

of claims 1 and 8. During the interview, the Examiner agreed that in Zellweger, May et al., Delano, and Ukai et al., a user must first select an upper level category before navigating the lower level contents associated with that category. This is because all of these references teach a tree-type hierarchical structure that requires an upper node to be traversed before switching from one set of lower level contents to a different set of lower level contents. Accordingly, none of these references teach or suggest the limitation that "a user traverses from the first set of first-level content indexes sharing the first category feature to the second set of first-level content indexes sharing the second category feature in response to a first user action without first invoking the second indexing level."

The cited references also fail to teach or suggest the limitation that the user "traverses second-level content indexes and representative indexes in the first indexing level in response to a second user action." (Emphasis added). Even if assuming, *arguendo*, that the menu of keywords illustrated in FIG. 4a of Zellweger, or the various program categories illustrated in FIG. 1D of May, or the search categories discussed in Delano, or the various types of racks (catalogs, documents, games, and albums) illustrated in FIG. 2 of Ukai, constitute the recited "second indexing level," a user, in traversing any of these levels, does not also traverse "representative indexes in the first indexing level" as is required by claims 1 and 8. Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 41-49 are new in this application. Claims 41-48 are in condition for allowance because they depend on an allowable base claim, and for the additional limitations contained therein.

With respect to claims 42 and 46, these claims recite that "the first first-level content index is selected as the first representative index based on a first weighing value, the first weighing value indicating that the first first-level content index is most closely associated with the first category feature, and the second first-level content index is selected as the second representative index based on a second weighing value, the second weighing value indicating that the second first-level content index is most closely associated with the second category feature." (Emphasis added).

During the telephone interview, the Examiner indicated that Ukai et al. discloses "representative indexes." In doing so, the Examiner pointed to FIGS. 1-2 and 7 where the file-case door of each file case displays a particular file stored in the file case. In Ukai, however, the file selected for display on a particular file-case door is not based on any "weighing value" that indicates that the selected file "is most closely associated" with a particular "category feature." Rather, the files that are selected for display on the file-case door are files that are associated with the latest file version. (See, Col. 8, lines 15-25).

With respect to claims 44 and 48, these claims recite that "each second-level content index is an index to a particular media content." The menu of keywords disclosed in Zellweger

which are relied-on by the Examiner, do not constitute a second indexing level having a plurality of second-level content indexes where "each second-level content index is an index to a particular media content" as is required by these claims.

Claim 46 is a new independent claim that recites "a second indexing level having a plurality of second-level content indexes coupled in a substantially circular manner, the second-level content indexes being composed of the representative indexes in the first indexing level." Support for this limitation may be found on page 3, lines 20-21 of the specification. Neither Ukai, nor any of the cited references teach or suggest this limitation. In Ukai, the files that are selected for display on the file case doors, which the Examiner contends are "representative indexes," are not also used to compose the "second-level content indexes" in a "second indexing level" as is required by claim 46. Accordingly, claim 46 is in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests an early indication of allowance of claims 1, 3-15, and 41-49.

If there are any remaining issues that may be resolved over the telephone, Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the number indicated below.

Applicant also invites the Examiner to download and review a simulation of an embodiment of Applicant's invention as

indicated in the undersigned's e-mail letter to the Examiner dated November 2, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

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